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SUBJECT: STATE SECURITY COURT UPDATE

REF: A. REF AMMAN 222
 B. 06 AMMAN 4685
 C. 06 AMMAN 2145
 D. 04 AMMAN 10304
 E. 06 AMMAN 7630
 F. AMMAN 1056
 G. AMMAN 1038
 H. TD 314/81273-06
 I. AMMAN 98

1. SUMMARY: Jordan's State Security Court (SSC) sentenced Ziad al-Karbouli and three others to death and handed down prison sentences in three other terrorism-related cases, while Jordan's Court of Cassation upheld the SSC's death penalty verdict for would-be suicide bomber Sajida Rishawi. Meanwhile, three defendants pled not guilty to plotting to assassinate President Bush during his November 2006 visit, the "Taxi-plot" defendants claim their confessions were extracted under duress, and three defendants denied any links to Hamas, requesting that senior Hamas leaders testify on their behalf. SSC prosecutors charged a group of eighteen men with recruiting fighters to join insurgents in Iraq, five others with recruiting suicide bombers to attack U.S.-led forces in Iraq, and a group of three men with plotting to bomb a warehouse that stored imports from Israel. END SUMMARY.

KARBOULI, 3 OTHERS, SENTENCED TO DEATH

2. In mid-March, the SSC (a special tribunal for terrorism and other cases that has both civilian and military judges and attorneys) sentenced former Iraqi customs employee Ziad Khalaf Raja al-Karbouli to death by hanging for the murder of Khaled Dasouqi, a Jordanian truck-driver who worked the Amman-Baghdad highway (ref A). Prosecutors also charged Karbouli and 13 other defendants, who were tried and sentenced in absentia, with attempting to attack oil tankers on the Jordanian-Iraqi border with rockets and explosives, and plotting to loot trucks carrying goods from Jordan to Iraq. The court sentenced, in absentia, Ashar Younis al Ramlawi, Iyad Khalaf Karbouli, and Ashar Nabhan al Assafi to death, while Thafer Aliwi, and Daker Aliwi received life sentences. Eight other defendants, Qaed al-Kubeisi, Yasser al-Kubeisi, Majeed al-Kubeisi, Mahmoud al-Kubeisi, Mohammad al-Kubeisi, Ashar al-Kubeisi, Mohammad al-Kubeisi, and Mahmoud Amra received fifteen year prison sentences.

AIRPORT ATTACK PLOTTERS SENTENCED

3. The SSC on April 2 handed down sentences for six men who plotted Al-Qaeda linked terrorist attacks at Queen Alia International Airport and hotels in Aqaba and the Dead Sea (ref B). Five defendants; Saad Nueimi, Mohammad Saeed Darsi, Yousef Abed Obeidi, Saad Fawzi Obeidi, and Turki Nasser were sentenced to life imprisonment; however, the Obeidis and Nasser were tried in absentia and are still at large. Mushen Mathloun was also sentenced to life imprisonment, but the

tribunal immediately commuted the sentence to 15 years "to give him a second chance in life." A seventh defendant, Abdul Karim Ikhdeir Jmeily, was acquitted for lack of evidence. As the court read out the verdicts, the defendants shouted "God is great" and "We're not afraid of your judgment - we won't surrender. Our holy battle will continue until martyrdom." The group, arrested in February of 2006, allegedly told authorities that Al Qaeda in Iraq wanted to claim responsibility for the foiled attack.

THREE SENTENCED FOR RECRUITING FIGHTERS FOR IRAQ INSURGENCY

¶4. On April 10 the SSC sentenced three men for recruiting others to join Iraqi insurgents (ref A). Hamzeh Nawaishah received a prison term of three years and four months, while two other men who were tried in absentia, Mohammad Hajjaj, and Abdullah Fafous, were handed five year sentences. Nawaishah told the court "I am not a criminal and Jihad is not a crime" upon sentencing. According to the charge sheet both Hajjaj and Fafous are now in Iraq.

THREE DEFENDANTS RETRIED / SENTENCED FOR PLOTTING ATTACKS

¶5. In late January the SSC re-convicted three men in a retrial for possessing explosives that prosecutors alleged were to be used for attacks against the U.S. Embassy in Jordan. The three men, Salah Awad al-Ali, Amer Mohammed al-Sraj, and Mohammed Ahmad al-Chalabi - also known as Abu Sayyaf - who is also currently appealing a death sentence he received in March 2006 for his role in the 2002 Ma'an uprising (ref C) - were originally convicted for illegal possession of explosives in December 2004 (ref D). However, the Court of Cassation ordered a retrial as there were several legal flaws in the case. In the January 2007 retrial, al-Ali's sentence was reduced from 12 years to 7 and one half years as the court determined he had a lesser role in the crime. Chalabi and Sraj received the same sentences as in 2004, 15 years and 10 years imprisonment respectively.

CASSATION COURT UPHOLDS DEATH SENTENCE FOR RISHAWI

¶6. On January 25 the Court of Cassation - Jordan's highest court - upheld the death sentence passed against would-be November 2005 Amman hotel suicide bomber Sajida Rishawi. The Court of Cassation also upheld death sentences for six others who were tried for the same charges in absentia (ref E). The King must sign a death warrant before the execution can take place. Rishawi, if executed, will be the first woman in Jordan to receive the death penalty for a terrorist act.

POTUS ASSASSINATION PLOTTERS PLEAD NOT GUILTY

¶7. On March 14 three Jordanians pled not guilty to charges of plotting to assassinate President Bush, conspiracy to carry out terrorist acts with flammable substances, and possessing illegal weapons and explosive substances (refs F, G). The three; Nidal Momani, 29, Tharawt Daraz, 24, and Sattam Zawahra, 28, were arrested in October 2006 after they unsuccessfully attempted to burn down a liquor store and a brewery in Zarqa. The defendants later confessed to discussing a suicide attack against President Bush's convoy and plotting to attack U.S. and Danish diplomatic facilities in Amman (note: there is no Danish diplomatic facility in Amman). The defendant's lawyer responded that his clients "are not members of any terrorist group" and that "they hail from very poor families and did not have any financial possibility to bomb the U.S. and Danish embassies."

"TAXI PLOTTERS" CLAIM TORTURE

¶8. In early March, Mohammad Hussein Shehaddeh and Mohammad Samih Hotari who were arrested in 2006 for plotting to attack

an American residing in Amman (refs A, H), withdrew their confessions claiming that they had been made under torture and duress. Defense witnesses, three relatives and two inmates testified that they observed torture marks on defendant's bodies. According to the charge sheet, the defendants, who began monitoring the activities of an American who used Hotari's taxi service, code named their plan "operation Yoya" but were arrested before they could carry out the plot. SSC prosecutors and the defendant's lawyer made closing statements in late April and are awaiting a verdict in the case.

DEFENDANTS DENY HAMAS LINK, REQUEST HAMAS LEADERS TESTIFY

¶9. In mid-February three defendants accused of plotting terrorist attacks in Jordan on behalf of Hamas (ref A), asked the SSC to summon Hamas leaders Khaled Mishaal and Moayyad Hamdan, as well as journalists and the directors of several Jordanian news services, to testify in their trial. In mid-March SSC prosecutors asked the court to deny the request on grounds that the defense was merely trying to politicize the case. The three men, Ayman Naji Hamdallah, 34, Ahmad Khalil Abu Rabieh, 27, and Ahmad Abu Diab, 29, who pled not guilty to charges of conspiracy to carry out terrorist acts and illegal possession of explosives and weapons in December 2006, claim they were forced to admit to plotting attacks and being part of Hamas on national television in May 2006.

18 CHARGED WITH RECRUITING FIGHTERS

¶10. On February 12 the SSC charged 18 men, six of whom remain at large, with recruiting fighters to conduct suicide attacks and fight against Americans in Iraq. One of the defendants, Awni Ramadan Mustafa al-Manisi was arrested, and one member of the group, Suleiman Ghayyad al-Anadi, was killed during a raid on a house in Irbid on January 9 (ref I). The defendants, seeking to join Al Qaeda in Iraq, undertook military training in Lebanon and Syria. Two of the defendants were arrested while illegally crossing the Syrian-Jordanian border. The defendants who will remain in custody pending trial are: Muhannad al-Shalabi, Anas Yusuf, Fadi Salamah, Faraj Sharif, Jamal Khalil, Hamzah al-Saqr, Muhammad Dabbus, Hamzah al-Bistawi, Jihad al-Saqr, Diya al-Ajai, Barakat al-Bawati, and Awni Ramadan Musatfa al-Manisi. The defendants who remain at large are Husayn Fawzi, Ruhayl Qudaysat, Baha Ahmad Musa al-Ajawi, Ahmad Ali Abdallah Qarmul, Jamal al-Dughaydi, and Shakir Yusuf hassan al-Absi.

FIVE CHARGED WITH RECRUITING SUICIDE BOMBERS

¶11. Nidal Salem, 34, and Zuhair Hamdan, 34, who pled not guilty to charges at the opening of their trial on April 11, retracted their confessions on April 25, claiming that a GID officer used torture to extract the confessions. The two are charged with recruiting suicide bombers to attack U.S.-led forces in Iraq. Three other defendants, Mohammad Hassan, Iyad Mohammad, and Bilal Abdul Ruhman face the same charges and are being tried in absentia. Salem and Hamdan traveled to Syria in November 2006 to make contact with recruiters there before returning to Jordan where they were apprehended, according to the charge sheet.

THREE CHARGED WITH PLOTTING SUBVERSIVE ATTACKS

¶12. SSC prosecutors charged three men with plotting terrorist attacks and transporting and manufacturing inflammable materials in mid-April. The defendants, Adnan Smadi, Adel Smadi, and Hamdi Fassooli were arrested in March as they attempted to attack a factory that imports Israeli minced turkey meat. Adel Smadi used juice bottles and cans of pesticide to manufacture homemade bombs, according to the charge sheet.

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